

Amendments to Claims**Claim 1(Canceled).**

Claim 2 (Currently Amended). A method for increasing the resistance of a host cell to aromatic carboxylic acids comprising:

- a) providing a host cell which comprises at least one ~~*E. coli yhcQ* gene~~first polynucleotide having a sequence as set forth in SEQ ID NO:2 and at least one ~~second *E. coli yhcP* gene~~polynucleotide having a sequence as set forth in SEQ ID NO:1; and
- b) up-regulating the expression of the at least one ~~*E. coli yhcQ* gene and the at least one *E. coli yhcP* gene~~first and second polynucleotides of (a) whereby the host cell resistance to aromatic carboxylic acids is increased as compared with an unmodified host cell.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended). A method according to Claim 2 wherein the at least one ~~*yhcQ* gene and the at least one *yhcP* gene~~first and second polynucleotides are endogenous to said host cell.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended). A method according to Claim 2 wherein the at least one ~~*yhcQ* gene and the at least one *yhcP* gene~~first and second polynucleotides are heterologous to said host cell.

Claim 5 (Previously Presented). A method according to Claim 2 wherein the host cell is selected from the group consisting of bacteria, yeast, fungi and plants.

Claim 6 (Original). A method according to Claim 5 wherein the host cell is an enteric bacteria.

Claim 7 (Original). A method according to claim 5 wherein the host cell is selected from the group of genera consisting of *Escherichia*, *Salmonella*, *Bacillus*, *Acinetobacter*, *Streptomyces*, *Methylobacter*, *Rhodococcus*, *Corynebacterium*, *Pseudomonas*, *Rhodobacter*, and *Synechocystis*.

Claim 8 (Previously Presented). A method according to Claim 2 wherein the aromatic carboxylic acid is selected from the group consisting of of para-hydroxybenzoic acid, para-hydroxycinnamic acid, cinnamic acid, salicylic acid, benzoic acid, and 1-napthoic acid.

Claim 9 -10 (Canceled).

Claim 11 (Currently Amended). A method according to Claim 2 wherein the at least one ~~*yhcQ* gene and the at least one *yhcP* gene~~first and second polynucleotides are expressed on a multicopy plasmid.

Claim 12 (Currently Amended). A method according to Claim 2 wherein the at least one ~~*yhcQ* gene and the at least one *yhcP* gene~~first and second polynucleotides are under the control of a strong promoter selected from the group consisting of *lac*, *trp*, *IP_L*, *IP_R*, *T7*, *tac*, and *trc*.

Claim 13-14 Canceled).